

REMARKS

Claims 1-7, 18-22, 33-35 and 37-38 are pending in the application

Claims 1-7, 18-22, 33-35 and 37-38 are rejected.

The office action dated Oct. 9, 2009 indicates that claims 1-7, 18-22, and 37-38 are rejected under 35 USC §101 for reciting nonstatutory subject matter. The office action also indicates that claims 1-7, 18-22, 33-35 and 37-38 are rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over a paper by Pyron ("Using Microsoft Project 98: Special Edition") in view of Smart U.S. Patent No. 5,241,621.

These rejections have been rendered moot by the amendments above. Claims 1-7, 18-22, 33-35 and 37-38 have been cancelled, and claims 39-46 are new.

New claim 39 is a method claim whose body recites a computer system. Thus, new claim 39 recites patent-eligible subject matter according to the machine-or-transformation test set forth by the Federal Circuit in In re Bilski.

New claim 39 should be allowed over the documents cited in the '103 rejection. Pyron describes the use of project management software that can schedule tasks, keep track of deadlines, assign resources and costs to tasks, track and analyze progress with respect to schedule and budget, and communicate with team members about changes in schedules. The progress tracking and analysis purportedly catches problems early so that corrective measures can be taken.

However, the project management software does not appear to provide a vehicle for collaborative problem solving among different parties. Neither does Smart. Smart discloses a system that provides structured messages to a user so as to elicit responses from the user concerning Imperatives of the user. The messages appear to be intended to guide the user along selected pathways that purportedly facilitate knowledge development, exchange and applications.

New claim 39 recites a method that facilitates problem solving. Issues that interfere with the completion of project tasks are recorded. Resolutions for the issues

also recorded. Comments on the resolutions are solicited from the parties. The parties are notified of the task status, the issues, the resolutions for the issues, and the comments on the resolutions. These features are not taught or suggested by Pyron or Smart. Therefore, new claim 39 and its dependent claims 40-44 should be allowed over Pyron and Smart.

Dependent claim 42 and new claims 45-46 recite methods that are adapted to parts suppliers. Support for these methods is provided in Figures 8, 12 and 13 of the application.

The methods of claims 42 and 45-46 can reduce miscommunications and resolve problems between customer and parts suppliers. In the case of certain large complex projects undertaken by the assignee, miscommunications and unresolved problems between these parties can result in lengthy delays in production schedule and substantial increases in production cost.

Pyron and Smart are silent with respect to parts suppliers. For this additional reason, claims 42 and 45-46 should be allowed over Pyron and Smart.

The Examiner is strongly encouraged to call the undersigned to resolve any remaining issues prior to mailing another office action.

Respectfully submitted,

/Hugh Gortler #33,890/
Hugh P. Gortler
Reg. No. 33,890
(949) 454-0898

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